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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

NRO review(s) completed.

THE SECRETARY

20 February 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF, SPECIAL SECURITY CENTER/CIA

SUBJECT: Comments with Regard to Referenced Memorandum

REFERENCE: Memorandum to Chief, Special Security Center,
From Chief/Public Information and Policy Branch,
dated 4 February 1963, subj: NRO Security and
Cover Requirements: Plausible Denial and Total
Security Concepts to Implement Executive Action

I have reviewed [] observations in referenced memorandum with interest and have made the paper available to the Deputy Director for Plans and Policy, who has primary staff responsibility for such matters.

Realizing that the paper is for "think" purposes but nevertheless designed to set the framework for future policy utterances, I would like to make a few observations on point:

a. Contra to my earlier parochial thinking, DOD Directive 5200.13 has successfully created a security atmosphere capable of containing the present [] U.S. satellite reconnaissance program. Practically overnight the DOD has shifted from an attitude of almost complete candor with respect to such matters, to one which has left high calibre technical news writers "scratching" around in old archives for information on which to base some highly speculative articles. In my opinion, there is no cover story capable of affording a cloak to the program in its present magnitude. Within roughly the past eighteen months the number of U.S. "white" satellite programs []

[] Obviously these cannot justify programmed expenditures. Furthermore, I believe that in light of the U.S. Government's position that it will not abandon its right to open skies, we have no obligation to attempt to create one. It would further appear that congressional and news media criticism of secrecy can be kept under control through good liaison.

b. On the other hand, I do feel that we do have an obligation to prepare for the eventuality that either domestic or international political pressures could force the U.S.

TOP SECRET

satellite reconnaissance program to adopt a completely covert attitude. To prepare for such an eventuality we should, to that extent feasible, earmark those NRP facilities which could continue to be used under such circumstances as against those we would abandon in order to evidence the U.S. Government's discontinuance of such activities [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] These earmarked facilities should even now be operated on a truly covert basis with knowledge of their existence extremely limited.

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[REDACTED]
Chief Security Officer
NRO Staff

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